DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 187 141 FL 011 378

AUTHOR Thypin, Marilyn; Glasner, Lynne
TITLE Leases and Landlords: Apartment Living.
INSTITUTION EMC Corp., St. Paul, Minn.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 64p.
AVAILABLE FROM EMC Corporation, 180 East Sixth Street, Saint Paul, MN 55101 ($3.50)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Community Resources; *Consumer Education; *Consumer Protection; Cultural Education; *English (Second Language); Housing; *Housing Deficiencies; Information Sources; *Landlords; Legal Responsibility; *Plumbing; Reading Materials

ABSTRACT

A short fictional work for limited English speakers presents the problems of a young couple having a leaky pipe fixed in their apartment and the experiences of their sister-in-law in finding a suitable apartment for herself. The maintenace man in the couple's apartment delays fixing their leaky pipe for a week, at which time they write a letter to the landlord. They keep a copy of the letter in case they have to take the landlord to court. After the sink is repaired, a letter from the landlord arrives with a new lease. They have decided to take a two-year lease so that the rent will not exceed eight percent. They check the new lease to determine whether it is the same as their previous lease and to make sure that there are no big black spaces where the landlord could add something. Their sister-in-law checks the newspapers to compare what is available and avoids those listed by real estate companies since she would have to pay for their services. She visits several apartments and notices the condition of the building and the opinions of tenants she meets in the building. After selecting the most suitable apartment, she is advised by her relatives to have the landlord write into the lease his promise to paint her apartment. (SW)

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Leases and Landlords

Apartment Living

by

Marilyn Thypin and Lynne Glasner

Consultant: Jean Gallancy, Attorney

Photographs by

Ira Berger

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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EMC Corporation, St. Paul, Minnesota

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Thypin, Marilyn.
Leases and landlords.

(Consumer education series 2)
SUMMARY: A young couple encounter problems in having a leaky pipe fixed in their apartment, but meantime, help a sister-in-law find a suitable apartment for herself.
1. Landlord and tenant—United States—Popular works. [1. Landlord and tenant. 2. Apartment houses. 3. Consumer education] I. Glasner, Lynne, joint author. II. Berger, Ira. III. Title. IV. Series.
KF590.Z9T48 346'.73'04342 79-9391
ISBN 0-88436-515-8

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Published by EMC Corporation
180 East Sixth Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101
Printed in the United States of America
0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Acknowledgment
Many thanks to Vincent McGovern, whose assistance on this book is greatly appreciated.

This is a work of fiction. Any relationship between the people, places, products, and events in this book and real people, places, products, and events is coincidental.

CHAPTER 1

Harry and Arlene Wilson live in an apartment. They don't live in a house. Every month they have to pay rent for their apartment.

Harry and Arlene work at different companies. Arlene can walk to work. Her job is near their apartment. Harry has to take the bus to work.

Tonight Harry and Arlene come home at the same time. They are glad that they are home. They worked hard at their jobs.

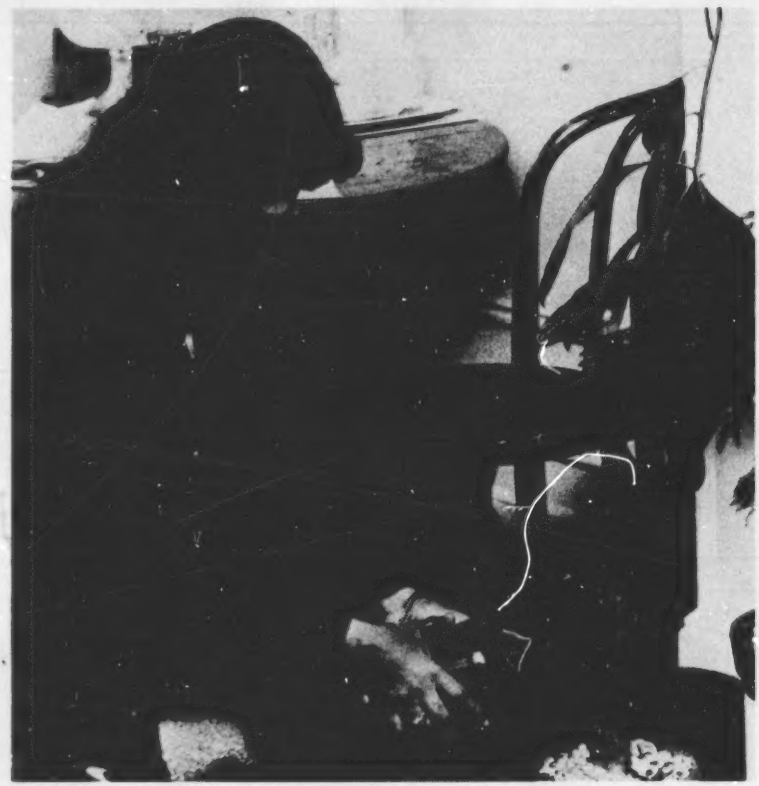
Harry and Arlene hang up their coats. Arlene decides to water the plants. She likes her plants. She takes good care of them.

Then Arlene and Harry talk about dinner. They are hungry. They decide that they will have fish for dinner tonight.

Harry and Arlene go into the kitchen. Arlene starts to bake the fish. Harry cooks the vegetables.

Then Harry goes to set the table. Arlene looks at the fish in the oven.

Soon dinner is almost ready and the table is set.



Arlene goes into the bathroom. She wants to comb her hair. She starts to go over to the sink. Then she sees some water on the floor. It looks rusty.

"Where did this water come from?" she asks herself.

Arlene is upset. She looks in the sink. There is no water in the sink. Then she looks under the sink. Water is coming out of one of the pipes.

Arlene calls Harry. Harry comes into the bathroom. He sees the water on the floor. He gets upset.

"What happened?" Harry asks.

"I don't know," Arlene says. "But I'm going to get the mop."

"OK," Harry says. "I'll look at the fish."

Harry goes into the kitchen. Dinner is not ready yet. He is glad. He wants to look at the sink.

Arlene gets the mop and starts to mop up the floor. Then Harry comes back into the bathroom.

"I didn't see any water on the floor this morning," Harry says. "Did you?"

"No," says Arlene. "I think that it's coming out of one of the pipes. There must be something wrong with the pipes."

"I want to look at the pipes," Harry says.

"You can't look at them now," Arlene says. "I want to mop the floor."

Harry goes back into the kitchen. He turns off the oven. The fish is ready.

Arlene mops up the floor. Harry comes back into the bathroom.

"Dinner is ready," Harry tells Arlene. "Let's eat. I'm hungry."

"We can't eat yet," Arlene says. "More water is dripping on the floor."

Harry goes to get an old towel. He puts it on the floor under the sink.

Harry looks under the sink. He looks at the pipes carefully. He sees that water is coming out of one of the pipes.

"You're right," Harry says. "Water is coming out of the pipe. But we can't fix it."

"I don't want any more water on the floor," Arlene says.

Harry tells Arlene that they will have to call Felix. Felix takes care of this apartment house. He is the manager of this apartment house. In other apartment houses, the manager is called the superintendent.

"We're lucky," Harry tells Arlene. "This leak isn't too bad. The water isn't coming out of the pipe very fast."

"I guess you're right," Arlene says. "Call Felix now. Then we can eat."

Harry goes into the living room. He calls Felix on the telephone. Felix says that he can't fix the pipe tonight. He also says that Arlene and Harry shouldn't use the sink in the bathroom tonight. Felix will come to their apartment tomorrow. Harry hangs up the telephone.

Harry is happy that tomorrow is Saturday. Arlene and Harry don't have to work on Saturday. They can be home when Felix comes. Harry wants to talk to him.

Harry and Arlene put dinner on the table. They sit down and eat. Harry tells Arlene what Felix said. He hopes that Felix can fix the pipe in the morning.

"He'd better come tomorrow," Arlene says.

"He said that he would," Harry says.

"Well, I hope so," Arlene says. "We have to use that sink. And I don't want to mop the floor again."

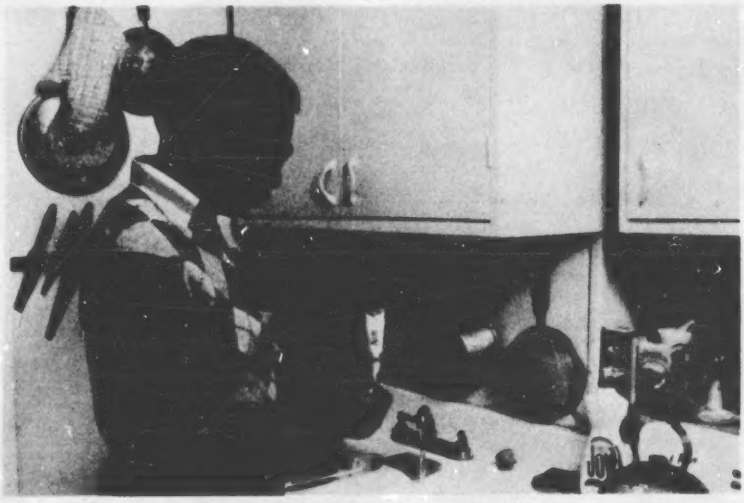
Arlene and Harry finish their dinner. They find out what is playing at the movie house near their apartment. They decide to go to the movie. But they have to hurry. The movie will start very soon.

CHAPTER 2

The next morning Harry goes into the bathroom. The towel under the sink is all wet. He puts another old towel under the sink.

This morning Harry and Arlene remember that they can't use the sink in the bathroom. This morning they have to use the sink in the kitchen. First Harry brushes his teeth in the kitchen sink. Then Arlene brushes her teeth.

Harry and Arlene don't like to brush their teeth in the kitchen sink. But they can't use the bathroom sink. They don't want to get any more water on the floor in the bathroom. If they turn on the water in the bathroom sink, more water will drip from the pipe.



Harry and Arlene sit down and eat breakfast. They are glad that they could sleep late this morning. They were out late last night.

During breakfast they wonder when the manager will come to their apartment.

"I hope that Felix gets here soon," Arlene says. "I don't want to sit home all day."

"He'll be here soon," Harry says. "I'm glad that today is Saturday. I want to be here when Felix comes."

"Felix could come in and fix the sink if we were out," Arlene says. "He has a key for our apartment."

"I know," Harry says. "But I want to talk to him."

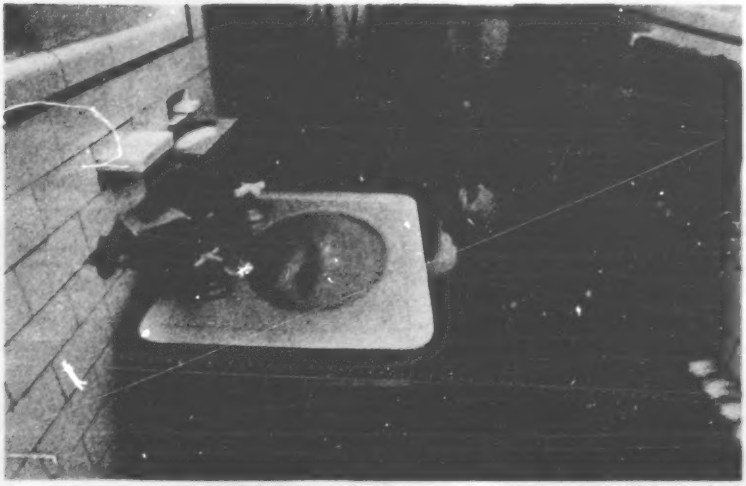
In a few hours the doorbell finally rings. It is Felix. Harry opens the door for him. He tells Felix about the trouble in the bathroom. Then Felix and Harry go into the bathroom.

Harry feels the towel on the floor. It is all wet again. He wipes up the floor. Then Harry puts another dry towel on the floor.

"See?" he says to Felix. "There is a lot of water on the floor. The pipe is still dripping."

"Well, I'll see what I can do with it," Felix says.

"OK," Harry says. "I'll be in the living room."



Felix starts to work on the pipes. First he has to turn off the water for the sink. Felix turns the little handle on the pipes. This handle opens and closes a valve. The valve turns off the water for this sink. Now Felix can work on the pipes. No water can come out of them.

Felix looks at one of the pipes carefully. There is a little crack in this pipe because it is rusty. The water has been coming out of the crack. The crack could get bigger very soon. Felix thinks that he should put a new pipe in the sink. But he doesn't have any new pipes for this sink in the basement. He will have to buy a new pipe.

Felix calls Harry. Harry and Felix talk in the hall. Felix tells Harry that the sink needs a new pipe.

"Can you put a new pipe in the sink today?" Harry asks.

"No," Felix tells him. "I don't have any of those pipes in the basement. I'll have to buy one on Monday."

"Can't you buy one today?" Harry asks.

"No," Felix says. "I have to go to a special store. It's not open today."

Harry is upset. He wants Felix to fix the pipe today.

"We'll have a wet floor all weekend!" Harry says.

"No, no," Felix says. "I turned off the water for the pipes to that sink. There's no water in those pipes now. The floor will stay dry."

"Oh," Harry says. "But then we still can't use that sink."

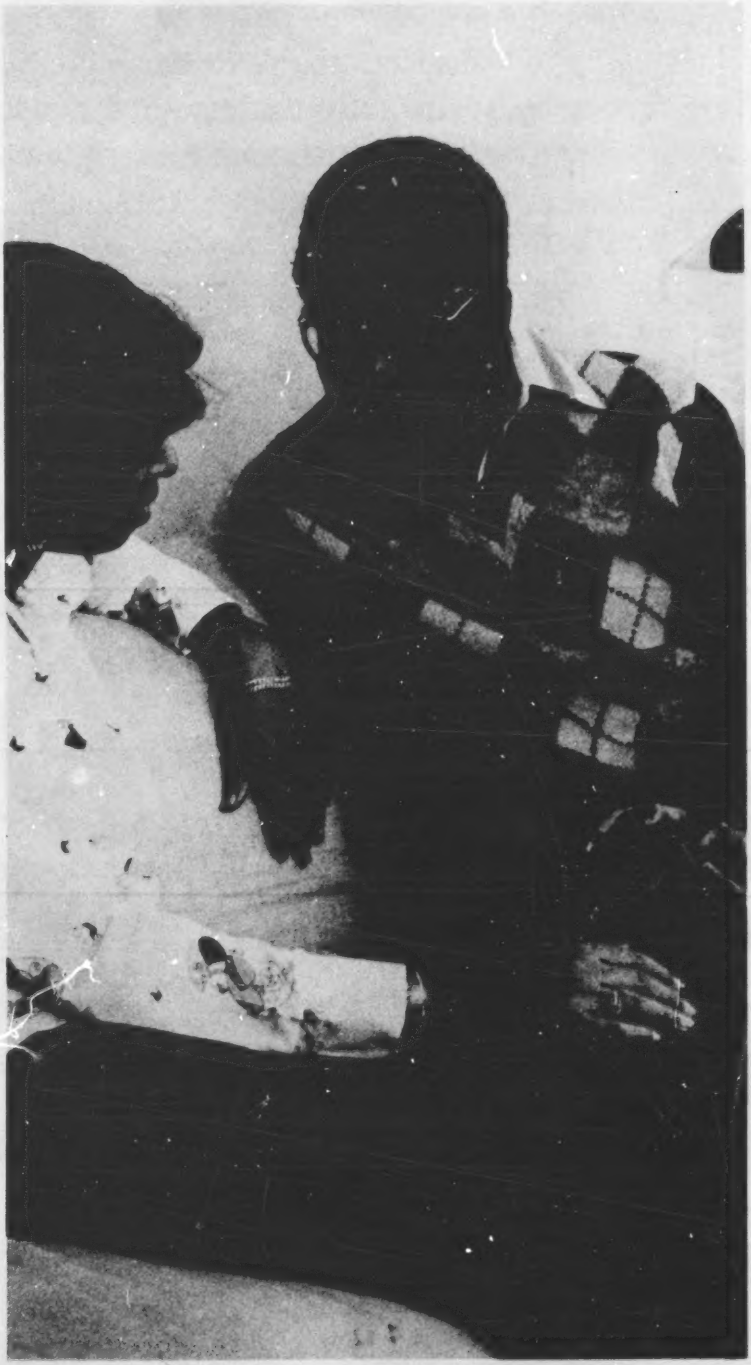
"That's right," Felix tells him. "I'm sorry. You'll have to use the kitchen sink for the weekend."

Felix leaves the apartment. Harry is very upset. He sits down with Arlene. He tells her what Felix said. Arlene gets upset too. They will have to wait. They can't do anything about the sink today. They hope that Felix can fix the bathroom sink on Monday. They don't want to wait any longer.

Harry and Arlene talk about apartments and houses. Some people own their apartment or their house. Then they have to pay for repairs when things break. Other people rent their apartment or their house. These people are called tenants.

Tenants pay rent to their landlords. The landlord owns the apartment building or house. The landlord uses some of the rent money to take care of the apartment building or house.

Most of the time, tenants don't have to pay for repairs in their apartment. If a pipe breaks by itself, the landlord has to fix it. But sometimes tenants may break a window in their apartment. Then the tenants have to pay to fix it.



Some landlords give some money to their managers. The managers use this money to fix things in the apartment house. If a repair doesn't cost a lot of money, the managers can just make the repair. If the repair costs a lot of money, they have to get the money for the repair from the landlord.

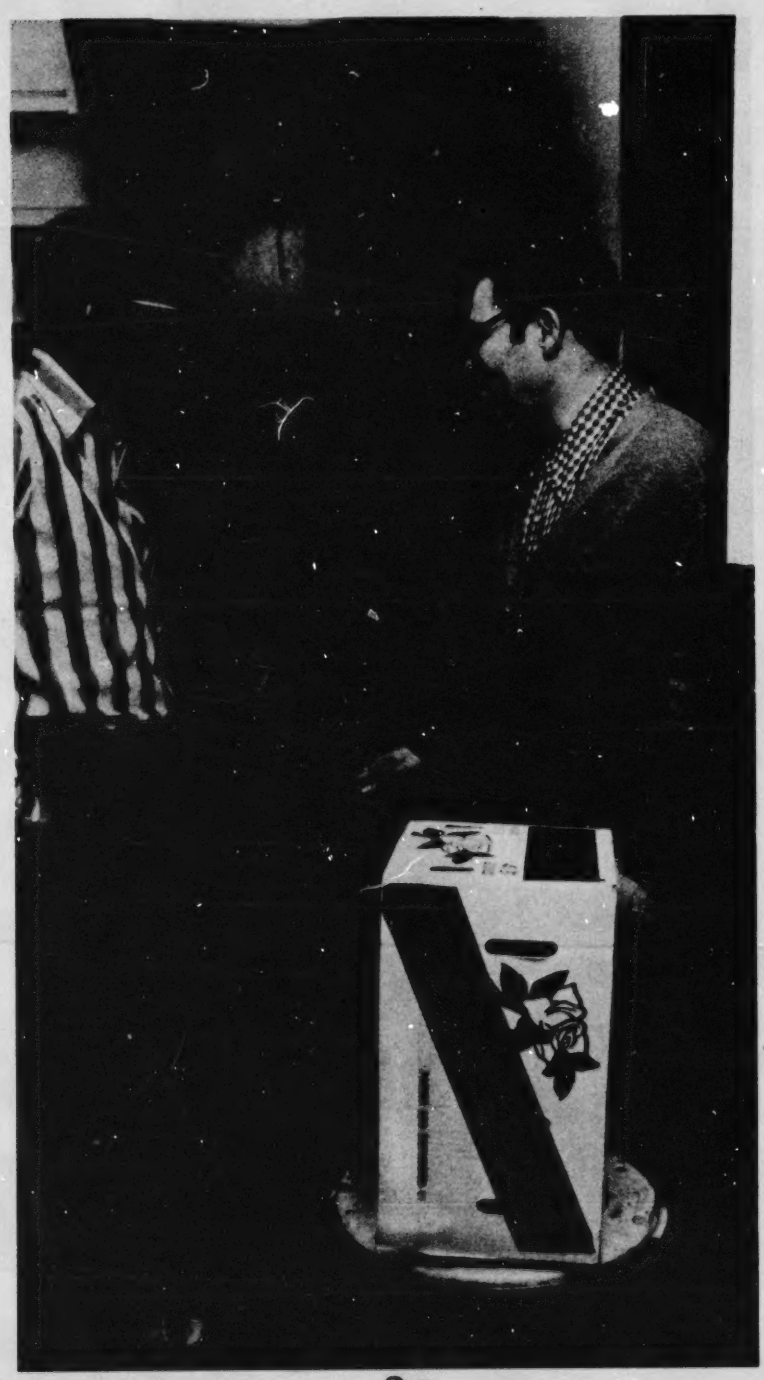
Today Felix told Harry that he has some money for repairs. The landlord gives it to him each month. The repairs in the Wilsons' apartment will not be expensive. Felix can buy a new pipe on Monday.

Felix has a key to the Wilsons' apartment. He can come in on Monday and fix the sink. Arlene and Harry don't have to be home. They know Felix. Another tenant in the apartment house told Arlene that Felix fixed something in her apartment. Felix did good work and he didn't break anything else. Harry and Arlene know that Felix would not take anything from their apartment. They can let him come in by himself.

CHAPTER 3

Monday evening Harry comes home from work. He thinks about the sink in the bathroom. He hopes that Felix fixed it.

Harry goes into the apartment. He takes off his coat and hangs it up. Then he goes into the bathroom. He tries to turn on the water in the sink. No water comes out. The water is still turned off. Harry looks at the pipe. It looks the same. Felix has not put in the new pipe. He didn't fix the sink today. Harry gets very angry.



Harry wants to talk to Felix. Felix lives in the same apartment house. He is often in the basement. Harry decides to look for him now. Harry goes to the basement of the apartment house. Finally, he sees Felix.

"Why didn't you fix the pipe today?" Harry asks Felix.

"I'll fix the sink tomorrow," Felix says. "I had a lot of things to do today."

"Did you buy the pipe?" Harry asks.

"No," Felix says. "I called about the price of the new pipe. I can buy it tomorrow."

"That's good," Harry says. "I hope you can fix it tomorrow."

"I'll try," Felix says.

Harry walks away from Felix. He goes back to his apartment.

Harry is upset. He wants Felix to fix the sink. But Harry is glad that Felix has the money to buy the pipe. He thinks about his friend Jim. Jim lives in another apartment house. His landlord doesn't give the manager any money. The manager always has to talk to the landlord when he wants to fix anything in the apartment house. Sometimes it takes a long time to get the money.

Arlene is home now. Harry comes into the apartment and sits down on the couch with her. They talk about Felix and the sink.

"Well, maybe he'll fix it tomorrow," Arlene says. "He has a lot of things to do in this apartment house. He said that he would buy the new pipe tomorrow. Then he can put it in our sink."

"I know," Harry says. "But he makes me mad. We shouldn't have to wait. We should be able to use our bathroom sink."

"It hasn't been very long," Arlene says. "Give Felix a little more time."

"Maybe I should call the landlord," Harry says.

"Not yet," Arlene says. "Give Felix a few more days. Maybe he'll fix the sink tomorrow."

"OK, OK," Harry says. "I don't want any trouble with this place. Every month we pay our rent on time. Felix is the manager. He works for the landlord. They shouldn't make us wait."

"Let's make dinner," Arlene says. "I'm getting hungry. We don't have to wait for dinner."

Harry and Arlene go into the kitchen and cook dinner. Soon the food is ready. They sit down and eat their dinner.

At dinner Arlene and Harry talk about their apartment. They have never had any other trouble with their apartment. Felix never had to make repairs in their apartment.

Arlene and Harry don't know their landlord. But they know that the landlord has to pay for the repairs in the apartment house. He has to pay for the new pipe for their sink because Arlene and Harry didn't break the pipe. There is a crack in the pipe because it is rusty.

Some landlords let the manager fix things right away. But others do not. They don't want to spend any extra money on the apartments. These landlords hope that the tenants don't ask the managers to fix things in their apartments.

CHAPTER 4

The next Friday Arlene and Harry cook dinner. Harry's sister Ellen is coming over to dinner tonight. Harry and Arlene want to cook a special dinner for her. They haven't seen her for a long time. Ellen has been living in another city. Now she has a new job in their city.

Harry and Arlene are still upset about the sink in their bathroom. Felix hasn't fixed it yet.

Harry has talked to Felix three or four times. Felix always says that he is too busy. He has too many things to do in this apartment house. He always says that he will fix it tomorrow. But he hasn't fixed the bathroom sink yet. It has been broken for a week.

Harry and Arlene decide to write a letter to the landlord. They want to tell the landlord that they are angry. The landlord should tell Felix to fix the pipe right away.

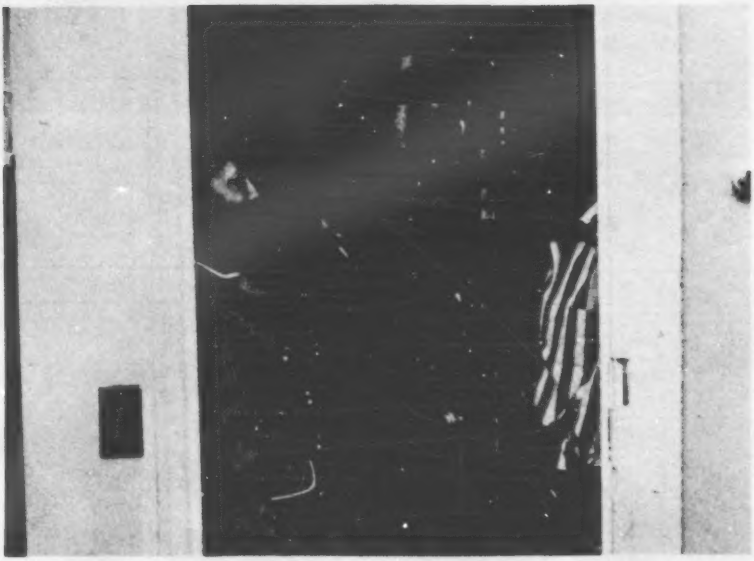
While dinner is in the oven, Harry goes into the living room. He sits down and writes the letter. The letter tells about the trouble in the Wilsons' apartment. It tells the landlord that they want Felix to fix their sink right away. If it is not fixed soon, they will call the city housing department.

Arlene and Harry know about the city housing department. When tenants have trouble with their apartments, they can talk to the people there. The city housing department wants people to have safe and clean apartment houses. When tenants call the city housing department, someone will come to see their apartment. Then the city housing department will send a letter to the landlord. It will try to make the landlord fix the tenants' apartment.

Harry makes sure that the letter has the Wilsons' name and address on it. Now the landlord will know that the letter is from them.

Harry reads the letter again. It is OK. Harry will make a copy of the letter for himself. He knows that he should keep one. The Wilsons may need it if they have to take the landlord to court. Harry will mail the letter tomorrow.

Harry shows the letter to Arlene. She likes it.



Arlene goes back into the kitchen. She looks at the dinner in the oven. It is almost ready.

Soon the doorbell rings. It is Ellen. Harry opens the door. He is happy to see his sister. He kisses her.

Harry is glad that Ellen has found a good job in this city. Now she has to find an apartment in this city. Right now she is staying with a friend and working at her new job. This friend has a big apartment with an extra bedroom. Harry wishes that their apartment were bigger. Then Ellen could stay with them.

Harry hangs up Ellen's coat. Then Ellen goes into the kitchen to talk to Arlene. Harry sets the table.

In the kitchen Ellen tells Arlene about her new job. Arlene tells Ellen about her job. They both like their jobs.

Ellen likes her friend's apartment. But she can't stay with her friend too much longer. Ellen tells Arlene that she has to find a good apartment for herself.

Soon dinner is ready. Harry, Ellen and Arlene bring the food to the table.

Ellen, Arlene and Harry eat their dinner. Ellen tells them that she wants to look for an apartment this weekend.

"How many rooms do you want?" Harry asks her.

"I don't want to live in one room any more," Ellen tells him. She smiles. She feels good. "I think that I make enough money for a bigger place now."

"You have to be careful," Harry tells his sister. "You should not spend too much money on rent."

"I know, I know," Ellen says. "But I can have more rooms now."

"That's great!" Arlene says. "What kind of apartment house do you want?"

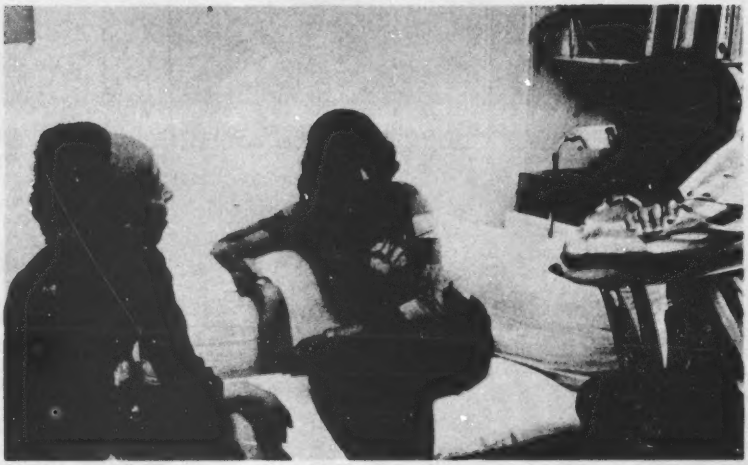
"I want a good building," Ellen says. "I want an apartment house with clean halls. It should also be quiet. I want to be able to sleep at night."

"We're lucky," Arlene says. "Our neighbors are very quiet. And our apartment is away from the street. We can't hear many cars."

"Yes," Harry says. "And the manager of this building takes good care of the halls. But now we're having some trouble with our sink. The pipe broke last week and the manager hasn't fixed it yet."

Harry tells Ellen all about the pipe in the bathroom. Ellen thinks about Harry's trouble with the sink. She decides that she will try to find an apartment with a good manager and a good landlord. Both of them have to work together. They have to keep the apartment house nice.

When Ellen looks for an apartment, she will have to look carefully at the halls in the apartment houses. She will talk to the tenants when she is looking at their apartments. They will know about the manager and the landlord.



Harry, Arlene and Ellen finish their dinner. They wash their dishes. Then they go into the living room and sit down.

"Look for an apartment house with a laundry room," Arlene says. "You should have washers and dryers in the apartment house."

"I will," Ellen says. "That will be nice. I don't want to take my laundry to the laundromat any more. My old apartment house didn't have a laundry room. I always had to take my laundry out. I didn't like that."

"Ellen, you have to pick out a new apartment carefully," Harry tells his sister. "I want you to live in a nice neighborhood."

Then Harry tells Ellen about the different parts of this city. He tells her about the different neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods in this city are safe. Other neighborhoods are not so safe.

Then they talk about the stores in the different neighborhoods. In some neighborhoods, the stores are expensive. In other neighborhoods, the stores are not so expensive. In some neighborhoods there are many stores. In other neighborhoods the stores are far away. Ellen would need a car to shop in those neighborhoods. Ellen can't buy a car now. She wants to be able to walk to the stores.

Then Harry, Arlene and Ellen talk about Ellen's office and the bus lines. Ellen does not want to spend a lot of time on the bus every day. She also doesn't want to walk too far to the bus stop every day.

Harry and Arlene live in Bay Gardens. They like this neighborhood. Harry wants his sister to live near him. Ellen would like to live near Arlene and Harry. Then she can visit them often.

Arlene gets tonight's newspaper. She opens the newspaper and finds the ads for apartments. Then Ellen and Arlene look at the ads.

Ellen looks at an ad for an apartment in Bay Gardens.

> **Bay Gar: 3 rm apt. 3rd flr, new kit, all utils. $325 See mgr. 121 Pine St.**

Ellen reads the ad. It says that it is a three room apartment on the third floor. It has a new kitchen. The landlord pays for the electricity and the heat. The rent is $325 a month. Ellen will have to see the manager at 121 Pine Street.

"That's a good one," Arlene says. "It's in this neighborhood. The rent isn't too high, is it?"

"No," Ellen says. "I can pay that much. The ad says that I won't have to pay for heat or the lights. The landlord pays for the utilities in this apartment house."

Ellen circles this ad. She will go and look at that apartment.

Then Ellen looks at some more ads. She reads one of them.

> **Chelsea: Lge 1 bdrm, safe bldg, nr busline, $375 Call 673-8255**

This ad is for a large apartment with one bedroom. It is in a safe building near the bus line. The rent is $375 a month. Ellen does not circle this ad. The rent is too high.

Ellen reads another ad.

> **Bay Gar: Sm 1 bdrm, 2nd flr elec. incl. $290 Call 547-1107**

This ad is for a small one bedroom apartment on the second floor. The landlord pays for the electricity. The ad doesn't say if the landlord pays for the heat. Ellen will have to ask about this. The rent is $290 a month.

Ellen circles this ad. She will call about this apartment.

Ellen and Arlene look at the rest of the ads. Some of these ads are for expensive apartments. Ellen can't pay a very high rent. She doesn't circle these ads. Other ads are for apartments with very low rents. But Arlene tells Ellen that these apartments are not in safe neighborhoods. Ellen doesn't circle these ads.

Some ads have the names of companies in them. These companies are called real estate agents. Real estate agents help people find apartments or houses. But people have to pay the agents for their work. It often costs one month's rent. Ellen doesn't want to pay extra money for her new apartment. Ellen doesn't circle any of these ads.

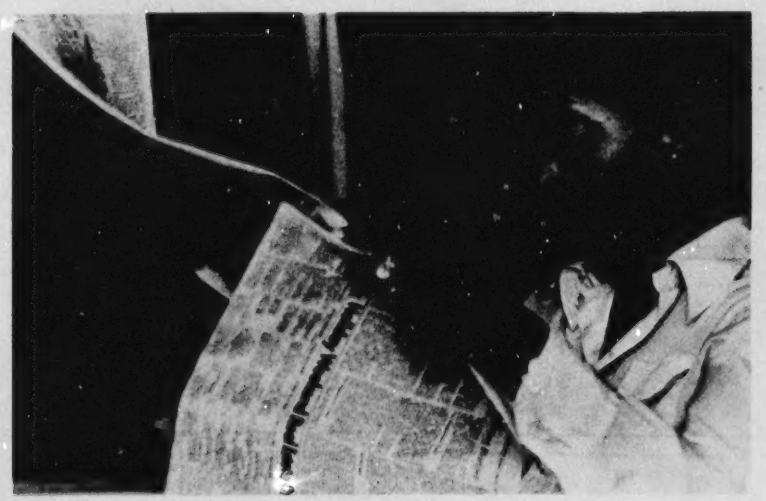
After a while, Ellen decides to go back to her friend's apartment. She is tired. She wants to get up early tomorrow. Ellen doesn't have to work on Saturdays. She can look for an apartment all day.

CHAPTER 5

Saturday morning Ellen gets up early. She wants to look at apartments today. She looks at the apartment ads in yesterday's newspaper.

First Ellen thinks about the neighborhoods. Last night Harry told her that Bay Gardens is a nice neighborhood. It is a very safe neighborhood. Many bus lines go there. Ellen thinks that she would like to live in Bay Gardens. She decides to look for an apartment in that neighborhood.

Then Ellen looks at the ads carefully. There are some apartments for rent in Bay Gardens. Some ads tell where the apartment is. Other ads have a telephone number. Ellen will have to call these telephone numbers.



Ellen starts to make some telephone calls. She calls the manager of one building. The manager tells Ellen that she can look at the apartment this morning.

Ellen talks to the manager of another building. This manager tells Ellen that someone else already took this apartment. Ellen crosses out the ad for this apartment.

Ellen makes some more telephone calls. She talks to the managers. Ellen asks for the addresses of the apartments. She writes them down on the newspaper. She wants to look at all of these apartments today.

Ellen leaves her friend's apartment. She takes the bus to Bay Gardens. She asks the bus driver where Pine Street is. He tells her. Ellen gets off the bus and walks toward 121 Pine Street. She wants to look at an apartment in this building.

Ellen walks slowly. She looks at some other apartment houses on Pine Street. She looks for "For Rent" signs on the buildings. Sometimes people don't have ads about their apartments in the newspaper. They just put a "For Rent" sign on the building. Then people know that there is an apartment for rent in that building.

Ellen doesn't see any "For Rent" signs. Soon she gets to 121 Pine Street. She rings the manager's doorbell.

The manager opens the door. Ellen tells her that she wants to look at the apartment for rent. The manager gets the keys for that apartment. She will show it to Ellen.

"People still live in this apartment," the manager says.

"When are they moving?" Ellen asks.

"They will be moving in two weeks," the manager tells Ellen.

Ellen looks at the halls. They are clean. Then Ellen and the manager go into the apartment. Ellen looks around. She looks at all of the rooms. There is a nice bedroom. The kitchen is big and new. The closets are big. Ellen looks out of the windows. The street is quiet.

"It looks like a nice apartment," Ellen thinks. "And the halls in this building are clean."

Ellen and the manager talk about the rent. The rent is not too high. Ellen will not have to pay for heat and electricity in this apartment. It might be more expensive to live in other apartments.

The manager tells Ellen more about this apartment. This apartment will be painted before the new tenant moves in. Ellen will not have to pay for the paint job.

"I'll call you," Ellen tells the manager.

"OK," the manager says. "But this is a good apartment. The rent is not too high. It will be taken fast. Call me soon if you want it."

"Well, I have to look at some other apartments," Ellen tells her.

Ellen and the manager say good-bye. Ellen leaves the apartment house. She likes this apartment. But she wants to look at many other apartments. Maybe she'll find a better apartment for less money.

On the street, Ellen looks at her newspaper again. She decides to go to an apartment house on Rose Avenue. She asks someone how to get there.

Ellen walks for a few blocks. Then she finds the apartment house on Rose Avenue. It doesn't look like such a nice building.

"Maybe the inside of this building is nicer," Ellen thinks.

Ellen rings the manager's doorbell. No one opens the door. She looks in the window in the front door. The halls are dirty. The lights in the hall are not very bright.

Just then a woman leaves the building. Ellen asks her, "Do you know where the manager is?"

"I don't know," the woman tells her. "He's never around here."

"I guess that he doesn't take good care of this building," Ellen says.

"No, he doesn't," the woman says. "I'm going to move out of this apartment house soon."

"Thanks," Ellen says. "I'm glad you told me that."

Ellen leaves this building. She crosses out this ad in her newspaper. She doesn't want to live in this apartment house.

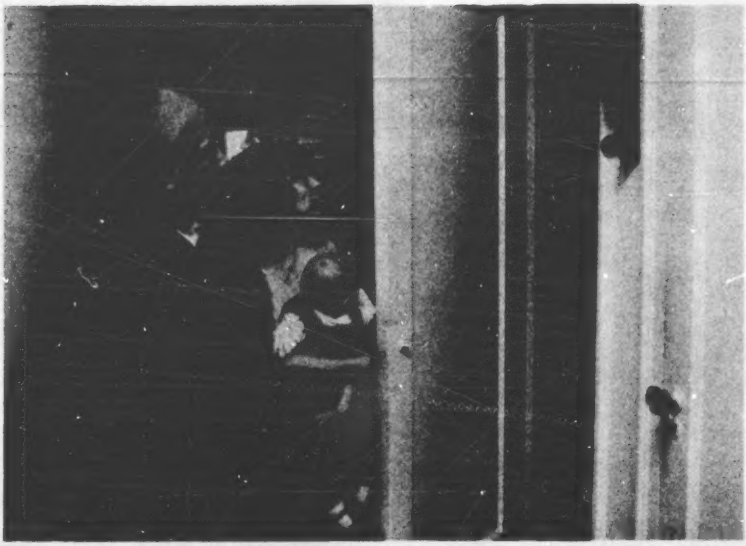
Ellen looks at the other addresses in the newspaper ads. She starts to walk to another apartment house.

Eilen goes into another apartment house. The tenants still live in this apartment. Ellen talked to the manager this morning. The manager said that Ellen could look at the apartment at 11 o'clock. Then the manager told this to the tenants.

Ellen rings the doorbell. A young woman with a baby opens the door. She tells Ellen all about this apartment. The woman and her husband like this apartment. But they want to move soon. They need a bedroom for the baby.

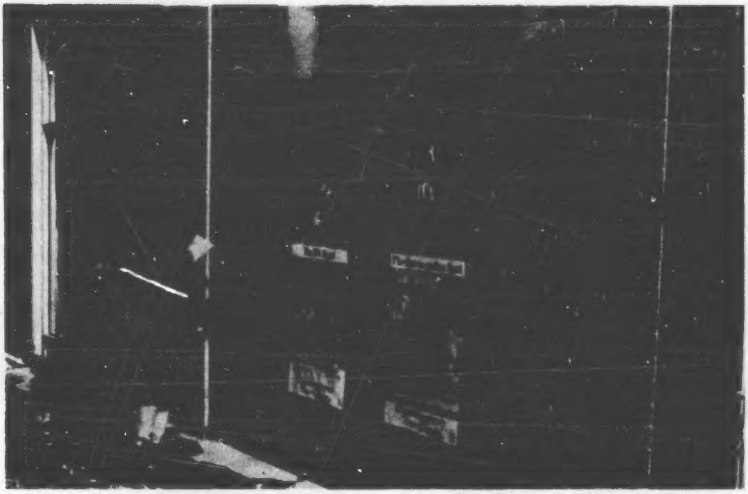
Ellen looks at the living room. A lot of sunlight comes through the window. Ellen can have a lot of plants in this room.

Then Ellen looks at the kitchen. It is small and old. Ellen will have to think about this kitchen. The kitchen in the apartment on Pine Street is nicer.



Then the woman tells Ellen about the apartment house. There are many nice people in this apartment house. There is enough heat in the winter. In the summer it doesn't get too hot in this apartment. There are washers and dryers in the basement. They work weil.

Ellen thinks that this is a nice apartment. She asks the woman about the manager and the landlord of this building. Ellen wants to know if they take good care of this building. The woman says that they fix things very fast. If Ellen decides to take this apartment, she will have to call the manager.



Ellen leaves this apartment house. She walks around Bay Gardens. She sees a nice, big supermarket. She also sees drug stores, dry cleaners, and dress stores. Ellen could shop for most things in this neighborhood. She thinks that she would like to live in this neighborhood.

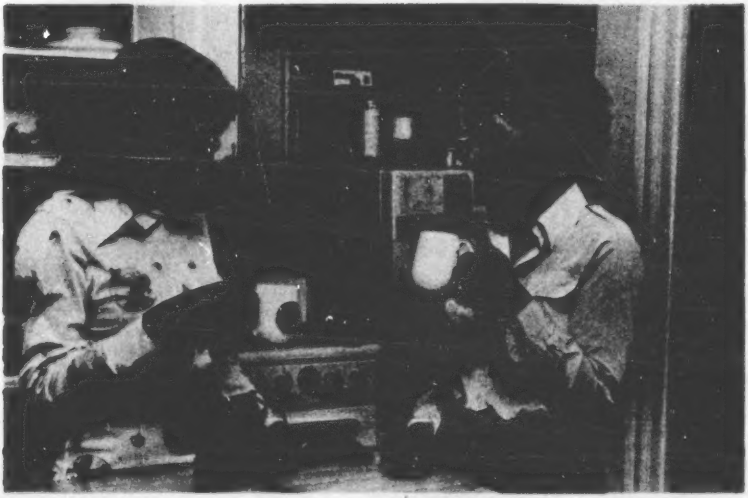
Ellen sees many buses in this neighborhood. The signs on some buses say that they go near Ellen's office. Ellen wants to live near a bus stop. She doesn't want to have to walk too far to the bus stop.

Ellen looks at two more apartments in Bay Gardens.

Then Ellen decides to go to see Arlene and Harry. On the way she thinks about the apartments. Ellen buys today's newspaper. She wants to see if there are any other ads for apartments. She wants to look at some more apartments tomorrow. She wants to get the best apartment for her money.

Ellen rings the doorbell at the Wilsons' apartment. Arlene opens the door for Ellen. She tells Ellen that Harry is not home.

Arlene and Ellen go into the kitchen to make some coffee. Ellen tells Arlene about her day. Ellen saw four apartments today. She starts to tell Arlene all about them.



Then Arlene and Ellen sit down at the table and drink their coffee. They talk about the rents in Bay Gardens. They are not too high. Ellen will be able to pay the rent in this neighborhood.

Ellen knows all about rents. In some apartment houses she will only have to pay the rent. She will not have to pay for the heat and electricity. But the rent may be higher in these apartments. In other apartment houses Ellen will have to pay the rent and the gas and electric bills. The rents for these apartments are not always lower than the other rents. And she will have to pay the heat and electric bills.

Ellen and Arlene talk about the price of heat and electricity in this city. Ellen thinks that they cost a lot of money in this city. She will have to be careful. She doesn't want to use too much heat and electricity.

Ellen knows that she has to be careful with her money. It will be expensive to move to this city. Ellen will have to move all of her furniture and other things from her old apartment. Then she will have to get all these things into her new apartment. Ellen may have to pay movers to move her things in a truck. It is easier to move this way. But it is expensive.

Ellen could rent a truck herself. Some of her friends could help her put her things in the truck. Then Ellen would have to drive the truck to this city. Harry and Arlene could help Ellen put her things in her new apartment.

Ellen doesn't know if she could move her things by herself. Even if her friends and Arlene and Harry help her, it would be hard work. But it would cost less money if she could move this way.

Ellen and Arlene talk about the new apartments. Ellen will have to pay for a lot of things when she moves into her new apartment. Ellen will have to pay for her new telephone and many other things.

Ellen and Arlene talk about Ellen's furniture.

"Do you have a lot of furniture?" Arlene asks.

"I have some," Ellen says. "But I think that I will have to buy some new furniture."

"You'll have to buy a new lock for your door," Arlene says.

"I know," Ellen says. "But maybe the landlord will put in a new lock."

Sometimes the manager will put a new lock on the door for the new tenants. Other times the new tenants have to buy locks for themselves.

Ellen has to make sure that no one else has a key for her apartment. She will only give extra keys to the manager and to Harry and Arlene.

Ellen will have to pay the rent for the first month before she moves into the apartment. She will also have to pay an extra month's rent. This money is called a security deposit.

Ellen and Arlene talk about security deposits. Ellen will be a good tenant. She wants to get all of the security deposit back when she moves out of the apartment. Some tenants are bad. They may break a window or make a big hole in the wall. Then they move out of their apartment. The landlord doesn't give them back all of their security deposit. The landlord has to use some of this money to fix the apartment.

Some landlords are bad. They try to keep the tenants' security deposits. In these apartment houses, sometimes the tenants move out and don't pay the last month's rent. Then the landlord will use the security deposit for that month's rent.

Other times the landlords just hold the security deposit. They give it back when the tenants move out. Ellen thinks about her security deposit. When she moves to this city, she will get it back from her old landlord. She knows that she has been a good tenant.

Arlene and Ellen finish their coffee. Then they go and sit in the living room.

Then Arlene and Ellen talk about the Wilsons' sink. Harry and Arlene had to talk to Felix many times. When the landlord got their letter, he called Felix. The landlord told Felix that he should fix the Wilsons' sink. Finally, Felix fixed their sink today.

Arlene tells Ellen that they are happy. They didn't want to call the city housing department. Arlene and Harry didn't want to fight with their landlord. They just wanted to use their bathroom sink.

Then Ellen tells Arlene about her friend John. His landlord would not fix his oven. Finally, John talked to a lawyer. The lawyer told John what he should do. John didn't have to pay his rent until the landlord fixed the oven. In John's city, he would not get into trouble with the law. In other cities, tenants could get into trouble with the law if they didn't pay their rent. The landlord could take them to court.

After a while, Ellen decides to go back to her friend's apartment. On the way she thinks about trouble with landlords. She wants an apartment with a good manager and a good landlord. She hopes that they will take good care of the apartments in the building. She hopes that they will fix things right away.

CHAPTER 6

The next week the Wilsons get a letter from their landlord. Arlene opens it. It is a new lease. A lease is a legal paper. It tells what the landlord has to do. It also tells what the tenants have to do. It tells how much the rent is.

Two months ago Harry and Arlene got another letter from the landlord. It told Harry and Arlene about the new rent for their apartment. They can get a new lease for one or two years. If they take a lease for two years, the rent will go up 8%. Their rent would be $324. In this city, the rent can not go up more than 8% if the tenant takes a two-year lease.

Arlene and Harry decided to take a new lease for two years. They told this to the landlord.

In a little while Harry comes home. Arlene shows him the new lease. There are two copies of the lease. One copy is for the Wilsons and one is for the landlord.

Harry gets out the old lease. Their friend Jill looked at the old lease before they moved into this apartment. Jill is a lawyer in Arlene's office. She knows a lot about leases and the law. Jill said that their lease was OK.

Today Harry wants to see if the new lease is different from the old lease. He looks at both of them carefully. They are almost the same. But the new lease says that the rent will be 8% higher. Their rent on the old lease was $300 a month. Their rent on the new lease will be $324 a month.

Both leases say that the landlord has to keep the building in good condition. He has to take good care of the floor and the walls in the halls. He has to make sure that the elevator in the building is safe. If he doesn't, people may hurt themselves in the elevator. Then they might be able to take the landlord to court. The landlord might have to pay them some money because he didn't keep the building in good condition.

The lease also says that the tenants have to keep their apartment in good condition. Tenants have to tell the manager if something breaks. They also have to tell the manager when something doesn't work. Tenants have to pay their rent on time. Tenants also have to pay the security deposit.

Arlene and Harry look at the new lease carefully. They want to make sure that there are no big blank spaces. They don't want the landlord to write anything else in the lease. At the bottom, Harry sees two lines. One line says "LANDLORD." The other line says "TENANT." Harry signs his name on this line. He signs both copies of the lease. No one can write anything below those signatures. Anything below those signatures is not part of the lease.

Harry will mail one copy of the lease back to the landlord. The landlord will keep it. Arlene and Harry will keep their copy of the lease in a safe place. They will have to show it to a lawyer if they have trouble with the landlord. Then the lawyer can tell Harry and Arlene what they can do about the trouble.

Just then the telephone rings. Harry picks it up. Ellen tells him that she found a good apartment today.

"The manager said that he would paint the apartment," Ellen says.

"Does it say that in the lease?" Harry asks.

"No, it doesn't," Ellen says.

"Did you sign the lease?" Harry says.

"No, not yet," Ellen says.

"Good," Harry says. "You still have time. The manager should write in the lease that he will paint the apartment."

"He told me that he would paint," Ellen says.

"Yes, but maybe he will forget," Harry says. "It's better if it is in the lease. Then the manager really has to do it."

"OK, I'll call him now," Ellen says. She hangs up the telephone.

Harry tells Arlene about Ellen's new apartment. Arlene is glad. Then they talk about their new lease.

"Does the lease still say that we can't have pets?" Arlene asks.

"Yes," Harry tells her.

"But I want a dog," Arlene says.

"Well, call the landlord and ask him," Harry says. "Maybe he'll say yes now. Talk to him about the paint job. A new paint job is in our lease."

"OK," Arlene tells him. "I'll call him tomorrow."

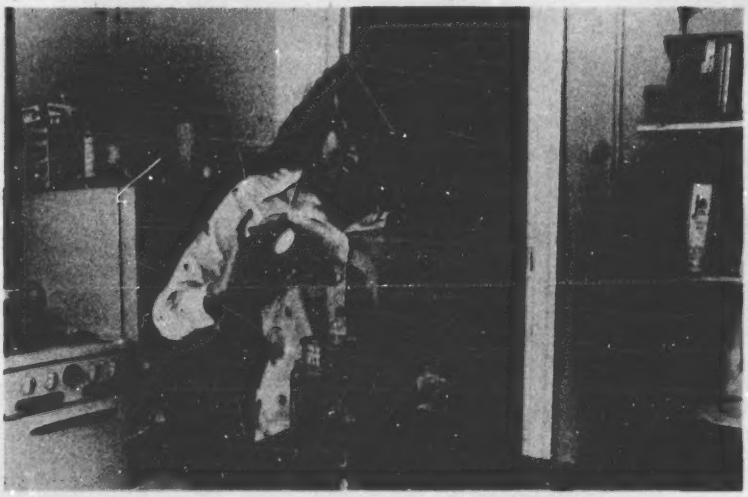
CHAPTER 7

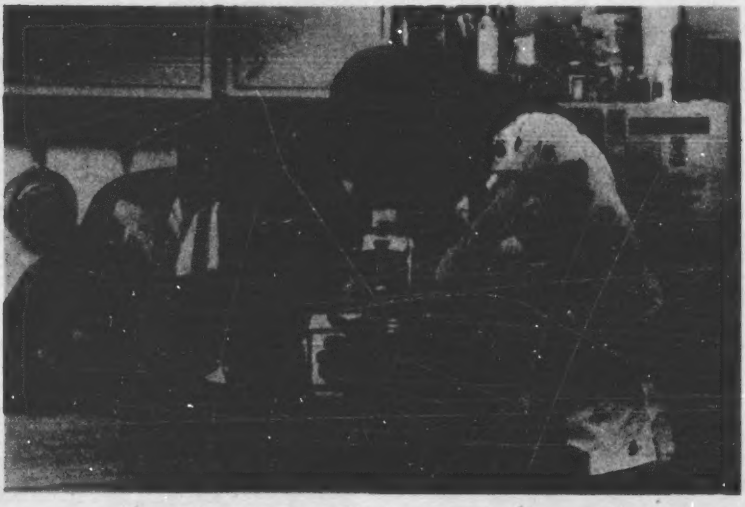
The next day Arlene calls the landlord. The landlord tells her that no tenant in this apartment house may have any pets. Arlene feels bad. She wants a dog.

Then Arlene asks the landlord about the paint job. When tenants in this building sign a new two-year lease, the landlord pays for the paint job for their apartment. The landlord tells Arlene that she should talk to Felix about the day for the paint job.

On the way home from work, Arlene goes into a pet store. She buys some pet fish and a fish bowl. She thinks that she can have fish in her apartment.

The next day is Saturday. After breakfast, Arlene feeds her new fish. She likes her new pets. It is easy to take care of them.





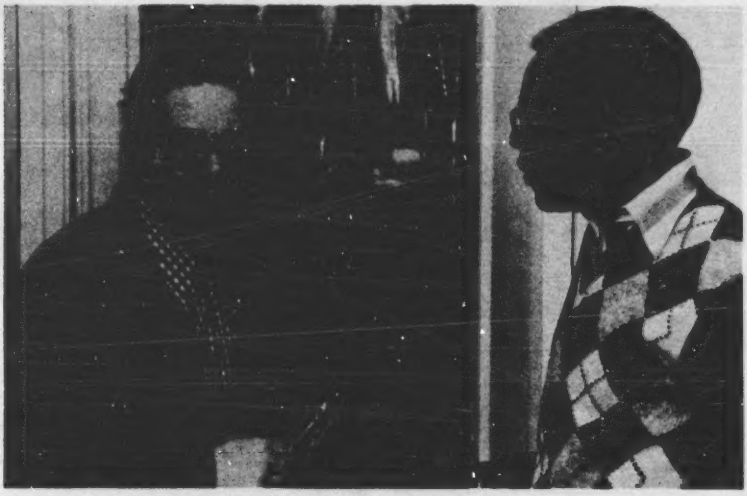
Harry comes into the kitchen. He looks at the fish. He likes them too.

"I guess that dogs can hurt an apartment," Harry says to Arlene. "That's why we can't have them here."

"Yes," Arlene says. "They also might bark at night. They could wake up the other tenants."

"But fish can't hurt anyone and they can't wake anyone up," Harry says. He smiles. "Landlords don't care if tenants have pet fish."

Then Harry decides to talk to Felix about the paint job today. He goes to the basement to find Felix.



In the basement Harry and Felix talk about the paint job. Felix knows that the Wilsons' apartment needs a paint job. He even called the painters yesterday.

Then Feiix and Harry come back to the Wilsons' apartment. Felix looks at the walls of the apartment. He has to make sure that there are no big holes in them. They are OK. The painters can paint these walls.

Felix says that he will get the painters for next week. Harry gets a calendar. Felix and Harry talk about when the painters can come to the Wilsons' apartment.

Felix thinks that they can come on Tuesday. Harry says OK. Felix leaves the Wilsons' apartment.

Harry tells Arlene that the painters will come on Tuesday. Arlene and Harry decide to get ready for the painters. They start to put their things in the middle of the living room. Then the painters can paint the walls.

They take everything off the walls. They roll up their rug. They put some other things in boxes. Arlene and Harry can put everything away in the living room. They can't put everything away in the kitchen and bedroom. They will have to put away the things in these rooms on Monday night. They will have to use these things before Tuesday.

Arlene and Harry work for a while. Then they sit down. They feel good. They have a new lease for two more years in this apartment. They think that their apartment needs a new paint job. They are glad that the landlord will pay for the paint job.

Arlene and Harry know that their apartment will be upset for a week. But after the paint job, it will look great. They can live in this pretty place for two more years. They are happy.

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ISBN 0-88436-515-8
EMC ELA 246055